

WHAT CHANCE FOR ARAB-JEWISH ACCORD?

The Basic Issues That Must Be Resolved

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LONDON

EYES are now turned towards the Aegean island of Rhodes, with its medieval Crusaders' fortress, and men ask: will the history of Palestine record a "Peace of Rhodes"? Will the name of this island be linked in the future with the beginning of a new and happier era, in which old feuds and nationalist hatreds will be forgotten, and enemies join hands in a great enterprise to develop and enrich an ancient soil?

Many people are sceptical as to the chances of one man's being able to bring about what has proved impossible in the past. Yet that man is a man of wisdom and justice, and he wields the authority of the supreme international body. All parties concerned must realize by now what is at stake if he fails. The odds, it seems to me, are in favor of success.

Observers in London are convinced that

WILL Palestine's anxious weeks of truce lead to a lasting political settlement or will they prove to be only a short wait between two periods of bloodshed? ROBERT WELTSCH is considered by many the best informed and most penetrating analyst of the political forces, both in Palestine and on the world scene, which are today struggling for mastery of that country's future. Fully aware of the pitfalls of prophecy, he here makes a try at foreshadowing the shape of peaceful things to come. In the past two years, Dr. Weltsch has contributed a series of articles to COMMENTARY that have received international attention; his latest was "Above All, Avert War!" which appeared in the April issue. Dr. Weltsch was born in Prague in 1891, and for almost twenty years (1919-38) he edited the *Juedische Rundschau*, official organ of the Zionist Organization in Germany. Since 1938, he has made his home in Palestine, where he has been editor of two weeklies, and has written for *Ha-aretz*, *Palestine Post*, and other publications.

as soon as a tangible plan emerges after the first stages of preliminary negotiations, the matter will no longer rest with the mediator alone; strong pressure will be exerted by Britain and the United States for a solution by "agreement"—which is the goal Mr. Bevin has longed for ever since he assumed responsibility for Britain's Palestine policy. Agreement requires, however, a common Anglo-American policy. Since the recognition of Israel by President Truman and the latest outbursts against Britain in the American press, the cleavage between the British and American attitudes has seemed sharper than ever.

How, then, can one expect a sudden change now?

As a matter of fact, American recognition was more of a shock to London than the proclamation of the state itself. For here Anglo-American relations are held to be the key to Britain's world position, and nothing could have hit the British government harder than such an outright gesture of dissent; President Truman's proclamation was a bombshell. For Britain, and especially for Bevin, Palestine is as much an "American" as a "Jewish" problem. Thus, while preparations go on in Rhodes, equal interest will be focused on Washington and London. The Anglo-American Round Table may become no less important to Palestine than Count Bernadotte's conferences.

Almost all observers agree that without a straightening-out of Anglo-American differences there will be no peace in Palestine. The fighting may be resumed, and there may follow, in the pungent phrase of the London *Economist*, an Anglo-American "war by proxy." In the view of close observers, however, certain signs of a rapprochement, at least on some points, have begun to

appear. The main question is, of course, who will yield. Meanwhile British public opinion, though opposed to formal recognition at this particular moment, has come to regard Israel as an established fact, here to stay.

The truce may turn out to be a very protracted affair, extended again and again as occasion requires. It may also provide a new disguise for the old escapism of those who do not want any solution, and therefore simply play for time by setting up one inquiry after another. For the two parties most immediately concerned, the Jews and the Arabs, it will be a "truce of attrition" and a war of nerves. At the beginning of the truce the two opposing sides seemed as opposed as ever—each side laying down conditions entirely unacceptable to the other. And there is still no outside force ready to fight a war in order to impose peace in Palestine. The basic problem, as it has confronted the British and the Zionists for over thirty years, remains unchanged and still has to be faced.

LOOKING back at the eventful and dramatic weeks between the termination of the British Mandate and the beginning of Count Bernadotte's truce, four facts clearly emerge:

1. The British withdrawal, with its deliberate creation of chaos and its—at least partial—"scorched-earth" policy, forms an inglorious chapter of British history. On the other hand, it was the British who, perhaps unconsciously and while declaring contrary intentions, implemented *de facto* partition almost exactly according to the United Nations scheme of November 29.

2. The Jewish state, recognized by the United States, the Soviet Union, and other powers, is now an established fact that can be eliminated only by war.

3. The Arab-Jewish war, although it did not reach its fullest scale, has already brought great loss of life and immense destruction to many parts of the country, apart from the disruption of economic life. Militarily, the Jews have done better than many expected.

4. The present truce is the last opportunity to avert final catastrophe and achieve a negotiated peace that would not be what the Germans call a *Siegefriede*—that is, based on military victory alone—but would correspond to the full intricacy of the situation. The object of such peace would be to pave the way for regional security in Palestine and peaceful cooperation between the Arab and Jewish peoples.

THE manner in which the British left Palestine was a universal scandal. It seems inexcusable even to those British who believed that they had ample justification for being angry. In Britain itself, many were bewildered when they read that British officials were simply abandoning their offices *in toto*, with typewriters, files, and furniture, saying goodbye and disappearing. Onlookers were horrified at the prospect of civil war in the Holy Land, but the British wish to get rid of the whole burden was so strong that painful impressions seemed of minor importance.

Public indignation did not question the good faith of a government whose top ministers had repeatedly and unequivocally declared in Parliament that they wanted to transfer the administration of Palestine to the United Nations *in an orderly way*. But this government would not let the UN Commission enter Palestine before May 1, and in the meantime permitted things to get into such a state as to render the intervention of that Commission after May 1 futile. By that time all mail service, air communications, etc.—which the Commission was supposed to take over—were already suspended, Palestine's credit balances blocked, and most of the other administrative services in disintegration.

By thus deliberately eliminating its recognized "legal successor," the British government created an administrative vacuum in Palestine; and, since a vacuum cannot withstand external pressure, a Jewish state had to fill it after the termination of the Mandate. Even those who held the view that no Jewish state should be proclaimed

without the full cooperation of the United Nations and without simultaneously settling the whole Palestine problem, could not, under the circumstances, oppose the logic by which a Jewish government emerged as the legal authority in an area already autonomously administered by the Jews. Ironical and paradoxical as it may seem, British non-cooperation with the United Nations forced the Jewish state into existence—and made unfeasible the transition period originally envisaged by the Assembly decision.

But the story does not end here. During the five months of smouldering civil war preceding the end of the Mandate, and in spite of proclaimed British "neutrality," there was a very strong suspicion among more intelligent Arabs that the British government was actually implementing the partition decision. The British had created autonomous national administrative entities, and at almost every place where there was any transfer of authority at all they handed over local assets and military strong-points to the side entitled to them under the partition scheme. There were many exceptions to this, and naturally we heard many complaints, but British action in conformity with the partition scheme was the general rule, even if it was less advertised.

Moreover, some secret understanding seems to have been reached by which the Arabs are not allowed by the British to enter territory assigned to the Jews by the United Nations. Although everybody agrees that the British act almost openly as the allies of the Arab League, Bevin has chiefly defended himself in Parliament by repeatedly stating that the Arab states have not invaded Jewish territory. This is not entirely correct; many attacks on Jewish territory have been launched by Arab states from the South and the North, and the British government cannot claim credit for the fact that they were repelled by Jewish forces. Nevertheless, Bevin's line of defense is of great political significance because it hints that British policy, although not explicitly conceding it, roughly accepts partition for

all practical purposes. From Mr. Bevin's statements it can be inferred that even he would agree that Arab incursions into Jewish territory (if they had occurred) would have to be branded as aggression. At present he argues that the Jews, and not the Arabs, violated the demarcation line of the partition scheme by taking Jaffa, Acre, and other Arab places not inside the Jewish state area. But what can all this mean but that the British accept partition, albeit grudgingly and unwillingly?

It was obvious at Lake Success, during the endless debates in the Assembly, that the British sided with the Arabs. In their view, all the UN discussions were highly unrealistic, and they were waiting until all proposals had proved impracticable before they resumed a leading part in the discussions. Now they are very proud that it was their initiative that led to the first success—the appointment of the mediator who achieved the four weeks' truce. In view of the unwillingness of all the powers to contribute military force, it was clear that only British cooperation could end the deadlock. Any kind of "trusteeship" was doomed, for by this time it would have required nothing less than a complete reconquest of the country by a strong army. That possibility can now be definitely ruled out. Today everything depends on the Arabs and Jews themselves: they can have war or peace.

THE British estimate of the situation is roughly as follows:

The Palestine problem cannot be solved against the wishes and the will of the whole Arab world. Moreover, a solution that would satisfy the Arabs, or at least a part of the Arabs, is desirable, not only from the British point of view, but also from the American. Indeed, such a solution would be in the interest of the United Nations and of the whole world, and—according to an old British argument—also in that of the Jews. A complete Jewish victory—even if possible—would win nothing permanent for the Jews; on the contrary, it would provoke Arab nationalism to the extreme, awaken thirst

for revenge, and create an enemy who would be a constant and deadly danger to the Jewish state.

The immediate result of an Arab defeat would be the downfall of some of the governments in the Arab states and the transfer of power to fanatical, semi-totalitarian nationalists suspicious of the West under any circumstances. Such a development might easily lead to some kind of permanent civil war amid a chaos in which uncontrollable forces would rise to the surface. Xenophobia would sweep over a vast area, bringing with it the persecution of Jews and Christians alike. Communism, which would not shrink from exploiting nationalist feeling, would win increasing influence. To prevent all this, the defeat and humiliation of the present Arab regimes, which, in spite of their ostensible intransigence, are still the most receptive to Western diplomacy, must be avoided. The Western world, relying on the Arabs as the guardians of a vast and strategically vital area, cannot permit Arab disintegration any more than Disraeli could permit a complete Turkish rout in 1877. Therefore the British do not want partition to be enforced against stubborn Arab opposition. Unless they want to drive the Arabs into a general Asiatic revolt against the West—Communist or otherwise—they must be very careful. So the British argue.

Many Jews (and non-Jews) believe that this picture does not faithfully represent the real Arab world of today. They see the Arab League as a British puppet devised to camouflage the designs of British imperialism, and they are convinced that the Arabs would be neither willing nor able to fight partition without encouragement or arms from the British. Left alone and without the handicap of an embargo on arms, the Jews, it is held, could win the war against the Arab world of today and make peace with it—even, perhaps, on the basis of a Jewish state in the whole of Palestine. The British argument, say these, is just another attempt to suppress the Jewish state—for reasons called imperialist, anti-Semitic, or even Nazi.

The weakness of the Arab armies was exposed in the first weeks of the war, and the notorious disunity among the Arab states makes an internecine Arab war more likely than a coordinated fight against the Jews. Those holding this view do not like the present truce, nor do they have any faith in the results of the coming negotiations.

However, even if this Jewish estimate of Arab strength (which possibly rests on an over-estimation of Jewish strength) is, in purely military terms, correct, the fact still remains that the opposing view of the great powers cannot be ignored, least of all by the Jews. Great Britain will not desert the Arabs completely, and the United States will not wage a war against Britain. Moreover, only if the Arabs continue to look on Britain as their protector (regardless of whether or not they like her) and remain dependent on her for arms and other materials, will she be able to exert that restraining influence which she has already made felt in order to prevent large-scale attacks on the Jewish state's territory.

IT is against this background that all proposals for a settlement must be seen. There is an abundance of rumors and surmises, the most persistent being to the effect that an ultimate settlement must be based on some closer relation between what are called the strongest (or even the only really existent) forces in the Middle East—namely, Israel and Transjordan. This idea has many supporters, in Britain as well as in the United States, and it is sometimes supplemented by a mysterious "Clayton Plan" that is said to envisage, not only the aggrandizement of King Abdullah's kingdom at the expense of Arab Palestine, but also some compensation for other Arab states, including the cession of a strip of southern Palestine to Egypt.

Closer cooperation between Jewish Palestine and Transjordan recommends itself for natural reasons. At the same time, it must be recognized that the difficulties of establishing common federal institutions are almost insurmountable in view of the com-

pletely different social structures of the two countries.

Federations, or confederations, remain mere academic abstractions as long as the concrete details are not defined. In any case, a federation always means imposing some form of restriction of sovereignty on the single units that compose it. The real question is how far this restriction of sovereignty is to go and how power is to be divided between the federal authority and the single states. Yet some common ground can easily be established; e.g., in economic development projects and even foreign policy.

But any such scheme will inevitably raise the question of immigration. As a sovereign state, Israel can administer immigration any way it pleases. The Arabs—and the British, too, to a certain extent—contend that unlimited Jewish immigration would be tantamount to preparation for aggression, because a growing Jewish population would put tremendous pressure on the Arabs inside the overcrowded Jewish state as well as on those at its frontiers. Immigration has long ceased to be regarded as a purely economic issue; it has now become a matter of political and even of military relevance. If there is to be peace, the Arabs say, military questions will have to be settled, not unilaterally, but by some mutual arrangement; otherwise the growth of military might on either side will arouse distrust and become a source of further trouble.

Immigration has often been called the stumbling block of all Palestine negotiations; it has prevented all solutions in the past and still may do so in the future. The Jews say that if immigration were made a bargaining counter, Israel would forfeit its most important sovereign right—and then we would be back where we were under the Mandate, only with less security and under less settled conditions. Here the cleavage is as great as it ever was. It could, however, be overcome if the root of the problem were clearly faced. Actually, immigration is only an accessory to the main issue—which is *expansion*. In other words: any territorial solution would have to be felt as perfectly

sincere and final. Otherwise there will be no peace.

The real mutual distrust between Jews and Arabs derives from what I would call the “bridgehead complex.” Probably all Arabs, insofar as they are capable of thinking politically, are deeply convinced of the aggressive and expansionist character of Zionism. Rightly or wrongly, they believe that a Jewish state with unqualified sovereignty would be nothing else than a springboard for further Jewish expansion. This fortified military bridgehead, as the Arabs see it, would serve as the base for a large and well trained army supplied with advanced weapons from the United States, the Soviet Union, and all the big industrial nations; and it would in addition develop its own armament industry. It would also be under the constant pressure of masses of immigrants—whose figures take on exaggerated dimensions in the Arab imagination. The guarantee of the United Nations being worth what it is (or what the so-called “Four Power Guarantee” proclaimed in Munich was worth to Czechoslovakia in March 1938), the Arabs are convinced they would be at the mercy of a Jewish army whenever the bell tolled.

BUT the “bridgehead complex” is by no means confined to the Arabs alone. Just as I was writing these lines I saw the following sentence in the *Manchester Guardian*, cabled by Arthur Koestler from Tel Aviv: “Since the invasion by neighboring states, who used Jaffa as a bridgehead for Iraqi and Syrian infiltration, even moderate Jews are convinced that to restore Jaffa to another uncontrolled Arab influx would be equal to suicide on the Trojan horse pattern.”

I am not sure whom Mr. Koestler regards as “moderate Jews,” but I do believe that the heart of his story is correct. The argument used here is the same one in essence that the Arabs constantly use with regard to the whole of the Jewish state; and it may not be far from the point to put the stress on the word “uncontrolled.” Those, how-

ever, who regard any "controls" as a violation of "sovereignty," will find it difficult to accept the fact that only some sort of mutually agreed-upon control can allay the fundamental distrust on both sides, or at least mitigate it to a degree that would make a *modus vivendi* possible.

Unfortunately, the happenings of the last weeks did not improve the situation in this respect. The Arabs' fears did not decrease; and now they seem to think that recent events have justified their worst apprehensions. This position is also held by many in Britain. It fits a British theory to the effect that Britain, while supporting the Zionist enterprise, still has to protect the Arabs from being dispossessed or subjected to the rule of a foreign minority. This view was expressed as far back as 1921 in the first report of a long succession of committees of inquiry—a report that was published as one of the famous White Papers on Palestine. The inquiry into the causes of the anti-Jewish disturbances of 1921 conducted by Sir Thomas Haycraft came to the conclusion, based primarily on evidence given by the political representative of the Zionist Organization, Dr. David Eder, that the Arabs' "fears" were justified and understandable.

It is significant that this was said at a time when Jewish immigration was very slight and the first stream of immigrants had already caused such an economic crisis that even some Zionist leaders wanted to halt immigration for an interval. (High Commissioner Sir Herbert [now Viscount] Samuel tried to help these immigrants by employing them in public works, mainly road-building. This project saw the beginning of one of the most romantic aspects of Zionism, the enthusiasm for primitive physical work for the sake of the homeland. The spirit of sacrifice and the social impact of that "Labor Battalion" became elements of lasting influence in the Palestinian labor movement. In later days some of those same road-workers and stone-breakers became *kibbutzniks* and Haganah leaders.)

Yet, though Jewish immigration figures at that time were negligible and seemed to

give no particular cause for fear, Haycraft said it was the duty of the mandatory power (and also in the interest of the practicability of Zionism) to allay Arab "fears" and give some reassurance and safeguards.

This was done a year later, in the White Paper of June 1922, whose authors were Winston Churchill and Sir Herbert Samuel. This document ingeniously expounded the philosophy of a "bi-national" Palestine, and while explicitly stating that no Jewish state was contemplated and no imposition of a Jewish nationality upon the Arab population was envisaged, it did declare that the Jews are in Palestine "as of right and not on sufferance," and that they were entitled to increase by immigration. This statement was designed, by quieting the complaints of the Arabs, to pave the way for a peaceful and constructive Zionist effort. But confidence was not restored. And since then Britain has tried more than ever to show the Arabs that they were protected and did not have to fear being overpowered. Each of the following White Papers and committees returned to this theme. On the other hand, most Zionist spokesmen of those days, while adhering to the aim of ultimate statehood, tried to show the unreasonableness of this fear, declaring that the Jews did not want either to dominate or to be dominated.

ONE of the psychological results of the military strength that the Jews have demonstrated since the very beginning of the fighting in 1948—twenty-seven years after Haycraft—is the Arab conviction that events have fully justified Arab fears. Though the outer world now sees the British as allies of the Arabs, the Arabs themselves accuse Britain (and some British admit the validity of the accusation) of a "historical crime" against the Arab nation—the crime of having brought a formidable non-Arab military force into what they call an Arab country, and thus endangering the Arab position in the whole of the Middle East. Behind much of the present attitude of the British public lies the awareness that Britain did something no other power

would have done by helping an ostensibly peaceful colonizing venture that eventually turned out able to muster a military force superior to that of the Arabs.

Apparently the British had underestimated the Jews and overestimated the Arab irregulars whom they had so freely admitted into the country before the termination of the Mandate. (The minister responsible bluntly stated in the House of Commons that he had "no information" about their intrusion.) When they realized the true relative strengths of the forces involved, the British intervened—though only temporarily—in favor of the Arabs, as at Jaffa, Jerusalem, and elsewhere, having become convinced that—in the words of the *London Times* of July 7—"the Zionist plan of frightening the Arab population into flight from the Zionist area proceeded steadily and efficiently, and its intensity increased as the extremist Irgun Zvai Leumi, whose ultimate and undisguised aim is to seize all of Palestine and Transjordan, gained greater successes. Jaffa and the Arab quarter of Jerusalem began to feel the pressure. Then came the massacre of Deir Yassin . . . and the machine-gunning of panic-stricken civilians in flight after an incomprehensible withdrawal of British troops from Haifa town had allowed the Zionists to gain control of the city."

A similar interpretation was given by such a responsible paper as the *Economist*, and this despite the unequivocal statement of the British Military Commander of Haifa, General Stockwell, that there had been no massacre in Haifa, and the testimony to the same affect contained in the High Commissioner's telegram to Lake Success.

To establish the truth about these events is of the utmost moral relevance; and the Israeli government will certainly regard it as one of its first duties also to investigate thoroughly and establish the responsibility for the incident at Deir Yassin, which was so strongly condemned by its predecessor, the Jewish Agency. It is vital for the sake of justice and Jewish honor.

But in the present context I am not concerned with this intricate and important

moral question; my argument refers merely to the psychological implications of the matter and its political effect. It served to increase Arab fear to the point of panic, and its effect on the "bridgehead complex" hardly needs exposition.

THE Jewish rejoinder is equally clear. Had the Arabs accepted the United Nations Assembly verdict (or "recommendation") for partition, nobody would have been hurt, nor would there have been any reason for fear. It was not the Jews but the Arabs who started the fighting. The Arab attack begun on December 1 turned into a boomerang—but it was the Arabs' own choice. The Jews had a right to defend themselves against unprovoked aggression—and did they not also defend the valid verdict of the highest international tribunal?

This case is, of course, very strong. But it remains strong *only so long as the original scheme is adhered to*. The Arabs, and many Englishmen, do not believe that the Jews have shown themselves sincere in this respect. They say that the Jews wanted war and prepared for it, in order to realize the full Biltmore program for a Jewish state in all of Palestine. The Arab and British fear that excessive immigration would necessarily lead to expansion is undiminished. Add to this the romantic magniloquence of the many Jewish speeches that continue to denounce partition and claim the whole country for the Jews. In the view of the *Economist*, the original UN scheme, with its strategically and economically impossible frontiers, does not make any sense except as a temporary improvisation in preparation for the conquest of "all of Palestine."

The elimination of this suspicion is of common interest to all concerned. It is a matter of the utmost delicacy and its solution would require agreement on a system of safeguards and controls that would not only remove the danger of aggression, but also prevent Arab-Jewish relations from being poisoned anew by similar fears. Such guarantees would give the Jewish state the freedom to regulate immigration according

to its own requirements, without making it a "danger" to its neighbors.

If this is not done, I do not see how a federal scheme can work. And without such a scheme there remains as the most favorable outcome the prospect of a state that would build its life with spade in one hand and sword in the other. Israel would have complete sovereignty, but also the cold hostility of its neighbors. Some Jews would welcome this; in their view it is desirable that the Arabs should live in constant fear of Israel. Thus would security be achieved: *oderint dum metuant*—let them hate, as long as they fear! This conception might be considered logically plausible—though by no means acceptable—if one matter of paramount relevance did not render it futile. That matter is the city of Jerusalem. A partition based on hostility and fear cannot solve the problem of Jerusalem. And Jerusalem is the key to the whole Palestine problem.

IN DEFIANCE of the platonic declarations in favor of the internationalization of the Jerusalem area, and in spite of the ensuing prolonged sessions of the UN Trusteeship Council, Jerusalem was not spared the horrors of civil war. The Holy City suffered more than any other part of the country and its fate still lies in the balance. Instead of becoming the religious centre of the world and a realization of Isaiah's vision of a "House for all Nations," it has been converted into a battlefield. It may be that the present plight of the city is to be regarded as the result of a deliberate Arab act of revenge for Jewish terrorist attacks that had already changed the city's appearance previously. Since the bombing of public buildings, including the King David Hotel, parts of the New City had come to look like some of the streets in blitzed London. Britons were free targets for terrorist bullets. The British reaction, including curfews and "security zones," caused many inconveniences, but civilian life on the whole went on almost normally. Since the partition decision, however, Jerusalem has become a place of unspeakable horror.

When the British left, they did not hand the reins over to the proposed "international authority"—which was non-existent anyhow. The Arabs refusing to take over their own municipal services, only the Jewish quarters retained some sort of municipal administration, although of a martial-law type. A fight for the city became inevitable, and the British let loose the Arab Legion, with the result that now the constructive efforts of a whole generation have been undone, the administration of the city disintegrated, economic life destroyed; and the population, deprived of the most essential public services as well as of food and water, has had to undergo a horrible ordeal—only those who have lived in Jerusalem can understand what it means to be without water in the summer—which they have faced with courage and endurance.

The siege laid to the Jewish quarters of Jerusalem was regarded as a legitimate means of war. Together with the shelling of the city, it had the obvious aim of frightening the Jewish population away and making the city preponderantly Arab before a final political decision was taken. This object has not been achieved. But the siege will be resumed if Bernadotte fails.

And there are strong signs that Jerusalem is playing a peculiar role in the political plan that some very influential people—not far away from Downing Street—seem to have in mind. This plan envisages the following, more or less: Since the Jewish state cannot now be abolished without very radical use of force, some sort of Jewish state will have to be accepted (though not necessarily within the borderlines drawn by the UN Assembly on November 29). This will demand a great sacrifice from the Arabs, and they will have to be placated by some visible increases of prestige to their side that could be given out as an Arab victory. Apparently, Jerusalem is considered the appropriate object for this purpose.

Constant rumors have it that the British government has made a deal with King Abdullah, providing that while the Transjordan Arab Legion (which actually is part

of the British colonial army) is to abstain from entering the area allotted by UN to the Jewish state, it is to concentrate its efforts on the capture of the entire Holy City. After the occupation of the Jewish quarter in the Old City, King Abdullah visited Jerusalem on a "triumphal" drive, and the British press hastened to announce that his Majesty's representative in Amman, Mr. A. S. Kirkbride, had asked the king to give an undertaking with regard to the safety of the Holy Places. Abdullah was pleased to give it, as this seemed to be an anticipation of his ultimate jurisdiction over Jerusalem. If the idea of an international regime in Jerusalem breaks down owing to the incapacity of the United Nations to enforce anything of the sort, the British would at least seem to prefer an Arab regime of Abdullah's type to Jewish domination of the city. In this respect, Abdullah has replaced the Mufti. (It is significant that no mention is made anywhere of the Mufti, who a short time ago seemed the most sinister figure and the real villain of the piece.)

Jerusalem as an Arab city or the capital of an Arab kingdom would be an affront to which Jews and Zionists could not be reconciled. A Zionist state with no voice in the affairs of Jerusalem, and a Zionist state that did not maintain Jerusalem as the spiritual center of the Jewish people as a whole, would seem to many to be a distortion of the Zionist ideal. Feeling for Jerusalem is deeply rooted in the Jewish soul, and it cannot be suppressed; it would take on an aggressive character if the martyrdom of the Jewish population there were prolonged. The incorporation of Jerusalem in an Arab state would create an irrepressible Jewish irredentism that would express itself not only in mystical dreams, as in former centuries, but would become a permanent threat to peace.

THE Jews will not accept an Arab regime for Jerusalem. But what is the alternative? Could Jerusalem become Jewish? The odds are against it. The city is entirely surrounded by indisputably Arab country. Un-

less some genuine rapprochement took place, a Jewish-dominated Jerusalem would be under the constant menace of a hostile environment, with the cutting of communications possible at any time. But apart from these geographical difficulties, inclusion of Jerusalem in the Jewish state would not alter the fact that Jerusalem is not only a Jewish city but also an Arab Moslem city.

Let us for the moment leave to one side Christian religious interests, which could easily be safeguarded under any regime, there being no political or religious rivalry with regard to them except for the internal quarrels of the various Christian denominations. Jerusalem's Arab citizens, however, form a very important part of the life and history of the city. Practically all the buildings that give Jerusalem its incomparable and timeless beauty are Moslem. From the architectural point of view, which is by no means irrelevant in classifying a city, Jerusalem has an undeniably Arab character. The rather colorless modern Jewish sections do not obscure the splendor of the Old City with the Dome of the Rock.

What can be done? Internationalization, of course, would be better than the inclusion of the city in any purely national state. But, unfortunately, experience does not bear out the practicability of internationalization. The precedent of Trieste is not encouraging. Moreover, the above-mentioned political intrigues, in which the British—and possibly the Americans too—look to a settlement that will reconcile the Arabs to partition by giving Jerusalem to an Arab ruler, makes us realize that partition may demand too heavy a price, if it means the total loss to Jewry of Zion and the doom of its flourishing Jewish community.

The answer to this challenge cannot be given by the sword alone. Has not the time come to reconsider the whole situation in the light of the inescapable facts? There is no question but that the Jewish state has done much better militarily than many expected, and it is now in a very strong bargaining position. Should it not be our principal aim to devise some political structure

for the whole country by which Jerusalem would remain a common capital for both Jews and Arabs?

Such a solution would admittedly be unique in the world. But the whole Palestine problem, and especially the significance of Jerusalem, is without parallel in history. For many years—the happier years of British administration—both communities lived side by side in Jerusalem and cooperated peacefully in many fields. Now British-made shells from Transjordanian cannon have fallen on the Jewish quarters, and the modern Arab suburbs are devastated. The destruction of Jerusalem would be an appalling tragedy. Is it really too much to expect that human beings should be capable of preventing it from going further, even at this late hour? If Jerusalem were to be destroyed, the Jewish state would be like a Golem—without a soul. With Jerusalem as a

common capital of both peoples of Palestine, even at the cost of a revision of some of the original features of the partition plan, all the essential values could be preserved for both.

Jerusalem is the sore spot on the map of the world today. That it is just this place of all places—the holy shrine of peace—that plays this role, is a heartbreaking tragedy for which all of us have to share the responsibility—Jews, Moslems, and Christians alike. Jerusalem may still precipitate a cataclysm and a disaster. But it may, also, still offer a chance, the last chance, of peace and reconciliation. Jerusalem is the key to any total Palestinian solution. It can divide Arabs and Jews beyond any hope of repair, but it can also be a stepping stone toward that community of feeling and interest which may yet bind together the seemingly irreconcilable.

WHO WILL SOLACE?

H. LEIVICK

WHO will solace the bucket
That hangs above the dark well,
Now that the thirsty sheep
No longer are seen at the well?

In the desert beds
Of sand lie shepherd and flock,
Forever covered over.
In vain the bucket rocks

White. Like an eye overcast
The dark water inspects
Spots. In the eye, seven eyes
With poisoned cataracts.

Water from the depths
Swells on the lips of the well,
Bursts through and flows away
On side and sandy ways.

Hanging on the pole
The bucket eternally eyes
The work of the wind-unraveler,
Unravelling the bucket dry.

Who will solace the bucket
That hangs above the dark well—
Now that the thirsty sheep
No longer are seen at the well?

H. LEIVICK is a leading figure in modern Yiddish literature, particularly well known for his play *The Golem*. Mr. Leivick was born in Russia in 1888 and came to New York, where he now lives, in 1913. This poem has been translated from the Yiddish by Jacob Sloan.